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Follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing

Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report provides information on the efforts and activities of the Secretariat and the funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, as well as major international non-governmental organizations on ageing, to implement the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002. Within the framework of the road map for the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action, the report highlights the progress and obstacles of the implementation process and provides a number of recommendations for the consideration of the General Assembly.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report responds to General Assembly resolution 58/134, which took note of the road map for the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002, contained in the report of the Secretary-General (A/58/160), and invited Member States and the United Nations system to incorporate ageing, as appropriate, into actions to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration, in particular the goal on the eradication of poverty. It stressed the need for action at the national and international levels to implement the Plan of Action, including setting national and international priorities and selecting appropriate approaches to ensure that countries achieve a society for all ages.

2. Stressing the importance of the collection of data and population statistics, disaggregated by age and sex on all aspects of policy formulation by all countries, the General Assembly encouraged the relevant entities of the United Nations to support national efforts in capacity-building and requested the organizations and bodies of the United Nations system and the specialized agencies to integrate ageing, including from a gender perspective, into their programmes of work. It also welcomed the progress made by some of the regional commissions in implementing the objectives and recommendations of the Plan of Action and encouraged other regional commissions to make progress in this regard. In addition, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on the implementation of resolution 58/134 at its fifty-ninth session. The present report provides information on the efforts and activities of the United Nations system to implement the Plan of Action, based on the contributions received from 14 United Nations system focal points on ageing, as well as from major non-governmental organizations working in the field of ageing.

II. Implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002

3. The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002, emphasized that implementation would require sustained action at all levels in order both to respond to demographic changes and mobilize the skills and energies of older persons. The Plan of Action also emphasized the primary responsibility of Governments to implement its broad recommendations, while recognizing that enhanced and focused international cooperation and an effective commitment by developed countries and international development agencies would enhance and enable the implementation process.

4. Two dimensions of the implementation process — national and international — were further elaborated in the road map for the implementation of the Plan of Action (see A/58/160). The road map set a practical strategy aimed at assisting countries in implementing the Plan of Action and, simultaneously, strived to stimulate international cooperation to assist Member States in their implementation efforts.

A. Intergovernmental action

5. The Commission for Social Development, in its resolution 42/1, reiterated its call to all actors at all levels, as appropriate, to participate in the implementation of, and follow up to, the Plan of Action. It encouraged Member States to include both ageing-specific policies and ageing-mainstreaming efforts in their national strategies, bearing in mind the importance of mainstreaming ageing into global agendas. It also encouraged Member States to establish or strengthen national coordinating bodies or mechanisms to facilitate the implementation of the Plan of Action, including its review and appraisal, and to include both ageing-specific policies and ageing-mainstreaming efforts in their review and appraisal of the Plan of Action.

6. Since its twenty-sixth session, in 2002, the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women has consistently paid attention to the situation of older women, especially those in rural areas. The Committee has expressed concern about inadequate pension schemes, health, education and employment opportunities for women. It has also expressed concern about the lack of statistics on older women in some countries. The Committee has recommended that States parties take the necessary action to improve the economic and social well-being of older women.

7. The Commission on the Status of Women also pays attention to the situation of older persons, both women and men, in its work. At its forty-eighth session, the Commission adopted agreed conclusions on the role of men and boys in achieving gender equality. The Commission urged Governments to provide training and education to encourage men to participate fully in the care and support of others, including older persons, persons with disabilities and sick persons, in particular children and other dependants. In 2005, the Commission will review the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the Assembly. **The Assembly may wish to recommend that the Commission continue to include in its agenda the situation of older women, particularly those who are most vulnerable, including those living in rural areas.**

8. In its resolution 58/134, the Assembly expressed awareness that the lack of data disaggregated by age and sex is an impediment to the consideration of ageing issues and the situation of older persons at both the international and national levels. The Assembly, in the same resolution, requested the Statistical Commission to assist Member States in developing modalities for disaggregating data by sex and age. The Division for Social Policy and Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat brought the request of the Assembly to the attention of the United Nations Statistics Division, requesting it to approach the Statistical Commission to consider how it might best assist Member States to disaggregate data by sex and age. The two Divisions will continue to cooperate to promote support to Governments in this regard.

B. Support for national action

9. The road map identified two interlinked and interdependent facets of national implementation: capacity-building and mainstreaming of ageing into national

development agendas. If countries are to meet the challenges and opportunities that accompany demographic and epidemiological transitions in the years ahead, they will need to build their infrastructures to deliver a sufficient supply of appropriate health care, housing, income support, transportation and other elements that will allow for an improved quality of life for their older populations. Countries, particularly developing countries, will require increased human capital, including researchers, educators, practitioners, planners and administrators with graduate education in gerontology and geriatrics — individuals who will have the skills and training not only to generate, evaluate and effectively disseminate new and existing knowledge and best practices but also to train others. Assistance for national capacity-building on ageing is on the agenda of several organizations of the United Nations system, as well as on those of non-governmental organizations.

10. A programme for the provision of technical cooperation to assist Member States to implement the Plan of Action was launched by the Department during the interregional consultative meeting on national implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, hosted by the Government of Austria (Vienna, 9-11 December 2003). The objectives of the meeting were to identify national implementation issues; produce strategy guidelines to mainstream ageing issues into national development agendas, contribute to the development of a technical assistance programme to build national capacity for the implementation and follow-up of the Plan of Action; and identify countries that needed to receive capacity-building assistance from the Department through pilot programmes to further the objectives of the Vienna meeting at the national level. Government and civil society representatives from Austria, Bolivia, Egypt, Jamaica, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, New Zealand, Senegal and Viet Nam participated in the meeting.

11. Following the meeting, requests for technical cooperation were received from several Member States. At the request of the Government of Senegal, staff from the Social Integration Branch of the Division for Social Policy and Development conducted a workshop in Dakar in March 2004. The workshop enabled 25 participants to gain an in-depth knowledge of global and national commitments to social inclusion in general and mainstreaming of ageing in particular; strengthened the capacity of government officials in situation analysis, conceptualization, implementation and monitoring of social inclusion programmes; and devised a plan to implement and monitor the recommendations of an inter-ministerial commission on ageing to ensure horizontal and vertical linkages and responsibilities at the operational and political levels. Follow-up technical support will be provided by the Department in the preparation of a progress report on implementation of the mainstreaming plan. In addition, in accordance with the Plan of Action and Commission for Social Development resolution 42/1, the Department plans to use the experience gained in undertaking the technical cooperation programme to draft guidelines for policy development and implementation.

12. The Department expects to undertake three additional advisory missions as follow-up to the Vienna meeting. The demand for assistance from developing countries and countries with economies in transition is greater than the core financial resources available to the Division for Social Policy and Development. A project proposal to raise funding for the initiative, including expansion of the programme to include additional Member States, was circulated among donor countries. The Department is collaborating with HelpAge International to extend its field-level experience in the countries selected for technical cooperation. The

General Assembly may wish to stress the need for additional capacity-building at the national level in order to promote and facilitate implementation of the Plan of Action. In this connection, it may wish to encourage Governments to support the trust fund on ageing to enable the Department to provide expanded assistance to countries, upon their request.

13. The Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) offers technical assistance to those of its Member States that request it, within the framework of the Ministerial Conference on Ageing and as part of a collaborative arrangement with the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) provides technical assistance to countries designing national policy on ageing and strengthens national capacity for follow-up of the Plan of Action and its regional implementation strategy. Assistance is being provided to Panama as it elaborates a policy, based on an analysis of the national ageing situation. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) attempts to strengthen the capacity of Governments and NGOs to implement programmes and projects. It organized an inter-country exchange programme on successful practices in empowering older persons (Chiang Mai, Thailand, November 2003). The ESCAP secretariat provided technical assistance to the Government of Indonesia and to a major NGO on ageing in India. It led discussions of policies on ageing at meetings of the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development.

14. Advocacy and capacity-building in the area of population ageing are often components of the country programmes of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in countries where ageing is considered an important issue. UNFPA particularly focuses on vulnerable and underserved groups, especially poor older persons, most commonly older women. UNFPA seeks to strengthen national capacities to address the concerns of older persons by supporting training institutes, such as the International Institute on Ageing in Malta and the international programme for policy development and capacity-building in population ageing in developing countries recently established at Columbia University (New York). UNFPA sends staff and supports the participation of government, academic and other personnel in the training courses of the Institute and the UNFPA/Columbia University programme. UNFPA promotes a focus on the older poor in the common country assessment mechanism, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and the poverty reduction strategy papers. In Indonesia, UNFPA developed a manual on sociocultural and operational research on ageing, conducted training workshops to build the capacity of institutions to run programmes benefiting older people, and supported fellowships to build long-term capacity. In Sri Lanka, support is provided to HelpAge International and other NGOs to train youth in voluntary home-care services and encourage care of older persons in households. UNFPA country offices also assist, as needed, in the implementation of legislation on ageing and the formulation of national plans of action on ageing. They sponsor policy dialogues on issues related to older persons and the ageing process. The office in Sri Lanka supported the Ministry of Social Services, universities, NGOs, and the national population association in advocacy, awareness-raising, participation in conferences and workshops, and issuance of publications.

15. UNFPA builds country capacity for data collection and analysis, emphasizing the importance of quality and timely data for policy formulation and programme planning. UNFPA was active in the preparation of the United Nations Development

Group's guidance note on United Nations country team engagement in the poverty reduction strategy papers, which stresses the multi-dimensional approach to poverty reduction and builds on the strong support provided to household surveys, sectoral studies and participatory assessments. These provide information on the various dimensions of poverty disaggregated, inter alia, by age and sex. In its assessments of the poverty reduction strategy papers, UNFPA noted the incorporation of ageing in a number of country reports, especially those of countries with economies in transition.

16. Ageing issues are continuously taken into account in the International Labour Organization (ILO) technical cooperation activities in the field of social protection, which include provision of country-specific advisory services on the sustainability and performance of social protection schemes and their extension to larger parts of the population, as well as training, statistics and research.

17. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) intends to strengthen efforts to assist agricultural policy makers in anticipating the effects of ageing on the rural sector and develop appropriate policy responses. FAO undertook country studies in Bolivia, Chile, India and Uganda on rural ageing and its effects on food security and rural poverty, gender equality, patterns of farming, and management of productive resources. Based on these studies, FAO will provide policy advice, technical assistance, and capacity-building services to its Member States and various stakeholders to enable them to more effectively address rural ageing in agricultural and rural development programmes.

18. A capacity-building component is included in the World Health Organization (WHO) project on integrated health-system responses to ageing in rapidly ageing countries, which, inter alia, strengthens the capacity of participating countries to respond effectively to the health-care aspects of population ageing. The project is a multi-country study to determine whether countries are moving towards an integrated health system in response to rapid population ageing. It strives, through its bottom-up approach and complementary methodologies, to ensure South-to-South exchange of experiences, knowledge and models of good practice; intersectoral and interdisciplinary sustainability; the active participation of many stakeholders; and a clear policy focus. The purpose of a multifaceted project, being undertaken by WHO in collaboration with the International Federation of Medical Students Associations, is to ensure proper training on ageing issues for all future health professionals. Results of that project include an overview of teaching in geriatric medicine in 62 countries, a series of seminars and training sessions at the Federation's global and regional conferences and a study on the attitudes of medical students towards ageing and old age in 33 countries.

19. The main mandate of the International Institute on Ageing in Malta is to provide training to developing countries. It has strengthened capacity by having training programmes in social gerontology, geriatrics and the economic and financial aspects of ageing and demography in Malta and overseas. It has further increased its training services in the last two years by establishing satellite training centres in Singapore and India. Establishment of centres in other regions is planned.

20. Training and education on ageing are among the major priorities of the International Association of Gerontology (IAG). In connection with the annual meeting and educational conference of the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education, IAG organized a workshop and two symposiums to discuss different

models for graduate training in gerontology and ways to deliver them worldwide and to identify new specialties for training that could contribute to the objectives of the Plan of Action.

C. International action

21. The principal objective of international action to implement the Plan of Action is the mainstreaming of ageing into global agendas, as established in the Plan of Action and further elaborated in the road map for its implementation. An important dimension of international mainstreaming efforts is the integration of ageing, particularly from a gender perspective, by the organizations and bodies of the United Nations system into their work programmes.

22. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in collaboration with the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania and HelpAge International, organized a regional workshop on ageing and poverty in Dar es Salaam from 29 to 31 October 2003. The main objective of the meeting was to explore the links between the commitments made at the Second World Assembly on Ageing and the poverty-related operational programmes of the Governments of eastern and southern African countries. The objective responds to the call in the Plan of Action for Governments to integrate older persons into national and international development frameworks. Seventy participants from government and civil society from 12 countries, as well as representatives of United Nations organizations, attended. The government participants were drawn from ministries of planning and social affairs in order to bring together officials who are generally charged with national poverty-alleviation programmes and finances in planning ministries, and older persons in social ministries.

23. Government representatives acknowledged that older persons in poverty have not been targeted or consulted in a systematic way, if at all, in national poverty programmes or in programmes related to the Millennium Development Goals. In the majority of cases, policies for older persons are residual and welfare-based. Political will and awareness-raising among all stakeholders, through a process that encompasses capacity-building and gathering evidence on the poverty of older persons, was thought to be crucial. Participants developed recommendations for Governments, international financial institutions, development agencies and civil society to incorporate ageing into national poverty strategies, poverty reduction strategy papers and the Millennium Development Goals. In April 2004, the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania began a review of its poverty reduction strategy and for the first time included ageing as a cross-cutting issue. National consultations that served as inputs into the review process also included older people. The Department will follow up with participants to gain information on national outcomes following the workshop and to explore ways to support and expand the process further. **The Assembly may wish to recommend that ongoing efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals consider the situation of older persons, ensure the integration of ageing issues into policies and programmes and provide opportunities for older persons to participate in decision-making and other activities.**

24. The United Nations Population Division continues to work in the area of population ageing and its consequences for society, with a focus on emerging issues

and trends. In 2003, the Division produced, for the first time, long-range projections, by country, to the year 2003. Those projections show, inter alia, the likely course of population ageing over the longer term, given a set of assumptions about future trends in fertility, mortality and migration. The latest update of the review of population policies, *World Population Policies 2003*, includes information regarding the views of Governments on whether population ageing is a serious concern, a minor concern or not a concern in their countries. The review revealed that 56 per cent of reporting countries view population ageing as a major concern and 43 per cent as a minor concern. Although concerns with population ageing are much more pronounced among developed countries, where three quarters of the Governments consider it a major concern, almost one half of developing countries expressed concern over population ageing. During 2004, the Division will update its wall chart on world population ageing. Work is also in progress to update United Nations population estimates and projections (the 2004 revision), including details by age and sex regarding the older population. Before 1998, data was organized into a number of age groups, with a final group of those aged 80 years and over; current data is organized into 5-year age groups, with a final group of those aged 100 and above. Another work in progress is a special project to strengthen the substantive basis — data and modelling — for the estimates and projections of old-age mortality and the projections of the older population. A study on the living arrangements of older persons worldwide is nearing completion. That study will include a compendium of data and a new analysis dealing with patterns of living arrangements and trends in developing and developed countries.

25. The Statistics Division prepared a technical report that reviews the questionnaires used to collect data for the *Demographic Yearbook* with regard to how the classifications, by age and sex, of the data that are requested from countries compare with international recommendations. The report presents the frequency with which countries provided the requested age- and sex-disaggregated data to the *Yearbook* for the period 1961 to 2000 and discusses how countries adhere to international recommendations on the age and sex classification of data for the topics covered. Based on the findings of the review, the technical report provides recommendations to render the age and sex categories used in the questionnaires of the *Yearbook* comparable to those in the international recommendations. When necessary, the report also makes suggestions for changes to the international recommendations on the age and sex classification of the data, either to make them comparable to international guidelines or to allow for better correspondence with policy relevant population groups.

26. The Statistics Division is preparing a symposium on population and housing censuses and an expert group meeting to review critical issues relevant to the planning of the 2010 round of population and housing censuses. The outcomes of these meetings will provide input for the revision of the *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses* with regard to emerging issues related to ageing. Specifically, upper-age limits for many of the tabulations will be reviewed to assess the adequacy of the age classifications used for analysing the social, demographic and economic situations of older persons.

27. The Department of Public Information focused much of its promotional work regarding ageing and the Plan of Action around the International Day of Older Persons on 1 October 2003. In observance of that Day, the Department of Public Information/NGO briefing programme featured an event organized in cooperation

with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the New York NGO Committee on Ageing, on the theme "Mainstreaming ageing: forging links between the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and the Millennium Development Goals". The Department also organized, in cooperation with the NGO Committee on Ageing, an exhibit entitled "Ageless", showcasing the talents and creativity of older persons. Through the network of United Nations information centres, the Secretary-General's message was translated into 12 languages and distributed to local media and NGOs. The Department of Public Information/NGO Section regularly features issues important to older persons in its information programmes for associated NGOs, of which there are 19 that work specifically on issues relating to older persons. The fifty-sixth annual Department of Public Information/NGO conference, on the theme "Human security and dignity: fulfilling the promise of the United Nations" (New York, 8-10 September 2003), also dealt with the issues of older persons and efforts to ensure dignity and security for them.

28. The Press Service of the Department of Public Information issued 84 press releases on ageing — 49 in English and 35 in French — since January 2003, primarily in relation to the work of the Commission for Social Development. Copies of the Plan of Action continue to be disseminated by the Department in English, French and Spanish.

29. Efforts by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme to implement the United Nations Millennium Declaration focus on the needs of older persons and the issues of ageing. This focus is relevant to all activities regarding poverty eradication, particularly to the implementation of goal 7, target 11, of the Millennium Development Goals, which aims to improve the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers. UN-HABITAT promotes integrating the needs of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, including older persons, particularly older women, in slum upgrading activities. UN-HABITAT continues its fruitful collaboration with the International Council for Caring Communities to raise awareness and develop conceptual approaches to the needs of older generations related to the physical environment. Successful collaborative projects include organization of conferences and design competitions for architectural students. The student design competition on integrated communities was featured at the Second World Assembly on Ageing and later presented at various venues in 2002 and 2003, including China, the Russian Federation and Thailand. The latest cycle of the student design competition was launched in January 2004 and the finalists will be announced to the Commission for Social Development at its forty-third session.

30. Recognizing that growing populations of older persons have significant implications for development programming and particularly for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is preparing, in cooperation with HelpAge International, a practice note entitled "*Ageing, poverty reduction and the Millennium Development Goals: a case for disaggregation*". The note is intended to generate debate within UNDP on the principles and mechanisms through which ageing might be included in policies and programmes to achieve the Goals and eradicate poverty, with the final objective of mainstreaming ageing issues into UNDP's development operations.

31. Population ageing is an important part of the UNFPA work programme in the area of population and development, including linkages between population and poverty, and data collection. The Fund is considering how best to further

mainstream ageing in the areas of reproductive health, gender issues and humanitarian responses to conflict situations. UNFPA encourages its country offices to advocate, and assist in, implementing the Plan of Action and its review process. Its strategy for programme support focuses on four main areas: advocacy, technical assistance, training and research. UNFPA encourages countries to collect data disaggregated by age and sex for well-informed policy planning and programme formulation, monitoring and evaluation. UNFPA supports culturally neutral and gender-sensitive research on population ageing, older persons and their needs. Studies were conducted in a number of countries, including China, India, Mongolia, Pakistan, South Africa, Thailand and Viet Nam. UNFPA works to eliminate discrimination, violence and abuse of women, including older women, and promotes policies that support gender equality among older persons. Support is provided for research on population ageing, including its sociocultural aspects and social and economic implications.

32. Key to the ILO follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing is the concept that a genuine solution to the challenge of ageing should be sought by increasing participation in the labour force and through promoting job creation thereby. The ILO employment and social protection sectors developed a joint proposal for the agenda of the ninety-sixth session (2007) of the International Labour Conference, on the theme "Employment and social protection in ageing societies". The proposal will be discussed during the meeting of the ILO Governing Body that will be held in November 2004. Ageing will also be on the agenda of the forthcoming ILO 7th European regional meeting (Budapest, 2005). The participants are expected to discuss, among other issues, the different transitions women and men in Europe will have to face in the coming years, including the transition from working life to retirement, and issues related to labour force participation and pension reform.

33. The development of human resources was discussed during the ninety-second session of the International Labour Conference (June 2004) and a new recommendation entitled "Human resources development: education, training and lifelong learning" was adopted. The recommendation calls on Member States to promote access to education, training and lifelong learning for people, including older workers, with nationally identified special needs.

34. The ILO is undertaking the revision of human resources development recommendation No. 150 (1975). A first discussion was held at the ninety-first session (2003) of the International Labour Conference, and the need to promote access to education and training for older workers was emphasized among the proposed conclusions. A second discussion, with a view to the adoption of a recommendation, was held during the ninety-second session (2004) of the International Labour Conference.

35. FAO activities related to ageing and older persons concentrate on analysing the linkages between rural ageing, agriculture and rural development, in general; supporting coping strategies and livelihood options for the rural elderly; and developing enabling measures needed at policy, legislative, and institutional levels to promote equal rights and opportunities for older men and women in rural areas. In December 2003, FAO organized a workshop to discuss the implications of rural ageing for agriculture and rural development, identify information and research needs, and outline options for future FAO ageing-related activities. Several visiting

specialists and FAO experts in selected technical fields were invited to the workshop to further the scope of in-house work and to contribute to the development of ideas for action oriented programmes. Preparatory work is currently under way to launch country studies to assess the workload of older men and women in rural areas affected by HIV/AIDS and to document the richness and depth of older people's agricultural knowledge. Insights generated through these studies will inform agricultural and rural development programmes designed to mitigate the negative effects of HIV/AIDS and support older rural people. In addition, the findings will enable rural communities and related institutions to enhance the role of older persons as producers and sources of agricultural knowledge.

36. Through the catalytic activities of its focal point programme on ageing, WHO has adopted an approach for implementation of the Plan of Action based on the principle of mainstreaming ageing through the activities of various departments, both within its headquarters and through its regional and country offices. The main objective is to focus on principles and methods of developing health-care systems that are responsive to population ageing, including through enhancing the capacity of the primary health-care sector at the country level. In its work, WHO gives priority to the principles and perspectives of its active ageing policy framework, launched on the occasion of the Second World Assembly on Ageing. The framework emphasizes health promotion and prevention throughout the life course; chronic diseases as the main causes of morbidity, disability and mortality in older age in all countries; universal access to community-based health services — with special attention paid to all the principles encapsulated by primary health care; and the broad determinants of active ageing. Another project is the development of basic principles for "age-friendly" primary health care centres. Through the development of such principles and standards, WHO seeks to provide policy guidelines to ensure that community-based primary health care services respond more appropriately to the needs of older persons. Through a series of projects, which involve Government agencies, NGOs and academic institutions, WHO provides Member States with the tools that will allow them to define the extent of the problem of elder abuse and equip primary health care workers with instruments for identifying elder abuse in the community and in institutions.

37. In the area of advocacy, WHO, in collaboration with civil society organizations, observed the 2003 International Day of Older Persons under the slogan "Older people: new power for development" and organized a round table on the theme. A poster and informational brochure were also developed. Ageing and health has also been approached from a regional perspective, reflecting the WHO structure of regional offices, in order to respond to the specific needs of a discreet and more homogeneous group of countries. For instance, the Regional Office for the Americas has developed activities ranging from research to training, policy development and advocacy.

38. The World Bank is engaged in analytical work and policy dialogue on income support for older persons in different regions of the world, in collaboration with client Governments, the United Nations system and NGOs. The Bank completed an analytical study of household data sets for 15 African countries, which delineated disadvantaged older persons, not only in terms of income poverty, but also in terms of the non-income dimensions of poverty, such as access to health care. The study concluded that there appears to be a strong case for targeted intervention in support of certain highly vulnerable groups of older persons. As a follow-up to its analytical

work, the Bank will continue the policy dialogue, including in many ongoing poverty reduction strategy papers, and explore opportunities for incorporating the elderly poverty dimension in its ongoing operational work. In the South Asia region, the Bank is active both in supporting analytical and operational activities to address the needs of poor older persons in South Asian countries. The Bank will continue its efforts to render the social pension programme operational in the states of India, and to encourage and finance analytical work, where possible.

39. The International Social Security Association is involved in the debate on the future of social protection arrangements for older people around the world. At the next general assembly of the Association (Beijing, September 2004), approximately 1,000 government policy makers and top managers of social security systems will discuss such topics as extending pension coverage to the large proportion of the population, especially in developing countries, that lacks such protection; sustaining pension and health systems in the face of the challenge posed by population ageing; and examining the consequence of pension reforms on the most disadvantaged groups in society. The assembly will culminate in a universal statement that focuses on the current situation regarding social security, what has been accomplished and what challenges can be expected in the future. It will recognize the continuing need to assure adequate standards of living and access to services tailored to an ageing population. The statement will call for social security institutions to rededicate themselves to extending coverage to those outside the formal sector.

40. The Plan of Action sees the important role of non-governmental organizations in supporting Governments in their implementation, assessment and follow-up activities. Effective organizations of older persons are identified in the Plan of Action as being crucial elements in its implementation. HelpAge International has initiated a number of activities to mainstream ageing into development processes. It co-sponsored several events in connection with the 2003 and 2004 sessions of the Commission for Social Development and contributed to discussions on such topics as follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing, achievement of international development and human rights commitments, including the Millennium Development Goals and older persons in armed conflicts. It has undertaken a range of activities to advance the recommendations of the Second World Assembly on Ageing and the commitments to older people, as identified by the General Assembly in its special session on HIV/AIDS, including publication, research and programmes that target older people as caregivers for orphans, vulnerable children and victims of the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

41. The International Federation on Ageing has dedicated its implementation efforts to advocacy, the collection and dissemination of information and the development of community-based projects. The Federation has been successful in calling on its members and other NGOs associated with ageing issues to translate the Plan of Action into different languages for dissemination to Governments, NGOs and the private sector. The Federation has developed international community-based projects for each of the priorities of the Plan of Action focusing on identifying and describing national policy development; profiling best practices from the grass-roots level; and assisting older persons to evaluate the impact of the programmes. Key projects include "Voices of action: an international study about being active and being older"; "The rights of older people: a collection of international documents"; "The world exposition of innovation: design for an ageing society"; and "Building capacity in health care".

42. The Federation has proposed a virtual global community, which is a single-access web portal that will systematically store information on global trends in policy and good practices against the backdrop of the Plan of Action. These knowledge banks will comprise national policies on ageing, community-based research and examples of good practices from grass-roots organizations in developed and developing countries. In September 2004, IFA will hold in Singapore its seventh global conference, on the theme "Global ageing: sustaining development". Prior to the conference, a meeting of senior government officials will focus on older people and development and look at national implementation through a series of round-table discussions.

43. The activities of the International Council for Caring Communities (ICCC) have given special emphasis to the man-made environment and the relationship between information and communication technologies and ageing. ICCC organized two international conferences at Headquarters during the forty-first and forty-second sessions of the Commission for Social Development, on the themes "Caring communities for the twenty-first century: imagining the possible" and the "Age of connectivity". These conferences were organized in collaboration, inter alia, with UN-HABITAT, the United Nations programme on ageing managed by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Information and Communication Technologies Task Force, the Department of Public Information, the private sector, the NGO Committee on Ageing and other NGOs. A publication was issued following the conference on "The age of digital opportunity: connecting the generations" to stimulate dialogue and mainstream ageing themes during the World Summit on the Information Society (Geneva, December 2003).

44. The International Longevity Center promotes the mainstreaming of ageing through educational activities targeted to the media, the public, academics and government officials. In reaching out to the public, the Center held a symposium in May 2003 on productive ageing. The Center has also been active in promoting geriatric training for health-care professionals and will publish and disseminate a document on preparing health professionals for population ageing and longevity that summarizes discussions held at a workshop organized during the Second World Assembly on Ageing. The Center is conducting a joint research project, the world cities project, to identify good practices that may improve health and the quality of life for older people, and is designed to raise awareness among public and private-sector leaders, researchers, the media, and the public. A publication based on this project, *Growing Older in World Cities: New York, London, Paris and Tokyo*, will be issued in 2005.

45. The International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse works to increase public awareness and knowledge of the issue of elder abuse; to promote the education and training of professionals and paraprofessionals in the identification, treatment and prevention of elder abuse; to further advocacy on behalf of abused and neglected older persons; and to stimulate research into the causes, consequences, prevalence, treatment and prevention of elder abuse and neglect. The Network has partnered with HelpAge International and several academic institutions in a global research project, which is led and funded by WHO and aims to develop a reliable screening tool for the detection of elder abuse and the strategies for its prevention. The Network also launched its research agenda in 2003 to determine gaps in knowledge and services and propose intervention strategies.

D. Regional action

46. The Plan of Action states that the United Nations regional commissions have responsibility for translating the Plan of Action into regional action plans. To date, three commissions have developed regional implementation strategies for the Plan of Action: ECE in September 2002, ESCAP in September 2002, and ECLAC in November 2003.

47. Most recently, a regional implementation strategy was adopted at a regional intergovernmental conference on ageing, held at ECLAC headquarters in Santiago from 19 to 21 November 2003. The regional strategy for implementation in Latin America and the Caribbean of the Plan of Action includes a set of recommendations in different areas, including income security, the employment situation of older persons, and pensions, as part of national strategies to diminish the probabilities of becoming poor in old age, with special attention to poor older women. One of the main topics of the agenda of the ECLAC ad hoc committee on population and development, discussed during the thirtieth session of ECLAC, held in San Juan, from 28 June to 2 July 2004, was the issue of ageing and development.

48. Most of the work of ECE in the field of ageing focuses on the follow-up to the ministerial conference on ageing (Berlin, September 2002). A memorandum of understanding was signed by ECE and the Government of Austria, which envisages that the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research, a Vienna-based international research institute, will assist ECE secretariat with follow-up work. One of the first activities was a workshop on the theme "Sustainable economic and social policies in ageing societies: indicators for effective policy-making", organized in cooperation with the Institute of Migration and Social Services of the Spanish Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. Further policy-oriented workshops and seminars are planned. A task force was established to offer the research institute guidance and advice on the content and priorities of the follow-up.

49. Following the adoption of the Shanghai Implementation Strategy: Regional Implementation Strategy for the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002, and the Macao Plan of Action on Ageing for Asia and the Pacific, 1999, the ESCAP Committee on Emerging Social Issues, which met in Bangkok from 4 to 6 September 2003, re-emphasized commitment to the Shanghai Implementation Strategy and requested the ESCAP secretariat, the United Nations regional focal point on ageing, to regularly review implementation of the regional and international commitments on ageing. ESCAP incorporated a technical cooperation project on follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing and the Macao Plan of Action in its programme of work for the biennium 2004-2005. The project will strengthen the capacity of Governments and civil society organizations to formulate and implement policies and programmes designed to achieve the goals of the Plan of Action. ESCAP conducted the South and South-West Asia subregional workshop on implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action and the Macao Plan of Action (Colombo, May 2004). The workshop demonstrated and field-tested a rapid appraisal methodology for assessing the impact of projects addressing ageing at the community level. A similar workshop is planned in Beijing for East and South-East Asia. A regional seminar on implementation of the global and regional mandates on ageing is scheduled for Macao, China, in October 2004.

50. In Africa, the African Union partnered with HelpAge International to develop and see adopted in late 2003 an Africa-wide regional action plan on ageing. While the conceptual framework and recommendations of the regional plan closely follow the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002, the document is not equivalent to regional implementation strategies of the regional commissions. Such a strategy should be developed for the ECA region, which would facilitate international cooperation for implementation of the Plan of Action, including technical assistance for national capacity-building on ageing in the region.

51. **The General Assembly may wish to encourage those regional commissions, which have not yet done so, to elaborate a regional implementation strategy for the Plan of Action.**

E. Research agenda

52. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs has continued to collaborate with the International Association of Gerontology to develop a research agenda on ageing for the twenty-first century. The purpose of the research agenda is to support implementation of the Plan of Action. The research agenda document, which was adopted by the Valencia forum in 2002 and presented to the Second World Assembly on Ageing, was printed by the Association and distributed throughout the world, and is also featured on its web site and the web site of the United Nations programme on ageing. During 2003, workshops were held to formulate regional research priorities, where possible, in connection with the elaboration and adoption of regional strategies for implementation of the Plan of Action. The ESCAP and ECLAC regional implementation strategies include specific recommendations for developing research agendas on ageing at regional and country levels. The first workshop was held in Cape Town, South Africa, in association with the African regional conference entitled "Geriatrix Africa '03" in March 2003. A report on the workshop was published in the July 2003 *IAG Newsletter*. Three subsequent workshops were convened in Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Asia and Pacific regions. A summary of the research priorities identified during the workshops is presented in the May 2004 issue of *IAG Newsletter* and will be featured on the web site of the United Nations programme on ageing.

53. **The General Assembly may wish to invite Governments, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations to encourage and support comprehensive, diversified and specialized research on ageing in all countries, particularly in developing countries. This should include international research with a view to promoting international research coordination, exchanging knowledge and supporting policy responses to ageing.**

III. Review and appraisal

54. At its fifty-eighth session, the General Assembly requested the Commission for Social Development to take up the issue of the periodicity and format of the review of the implementation of the Plan of Action at its forty-second session, taking into account the provisions of Assembly resolution 57/270 B. In order to assist the Commission in its work, the Secretariat prepared a note on the modalities for the review and appraisal of the Plan of Action, which was based primarily on the

deliberations of the meeting of experts convened in Malta in November 2003 (see E/CN.5/2004/6).

55. The Commission for Social Development, in concluding its deliberations on ageing, decided to undertake the review and appraisal of the Plan of Action every five years, with each review and appraisal cycle to focus on one of the priorities identified in the Plan of Action. It also requested the Secretary-General to propose guidelines for the review and appraisal process, taking into account the views of Member States, civil society and the private sector, including the proposal for a specific theme emanating from the Plan of Action for the first review and appraisal cycle.

56. In response to the Commission's resolution, the Secretariat sent a note verbale to Member States soliciting views regarding the review and appraisal process and also requesting information on the existing national coordinating bodies on ageing. The Secretariat has also started the preparation of guidelines for the review and appraisal of the Plan of Action.

57. At the regional level, ECLAC elaborated an integrated set of indicators for monitoring the situation of older persons using data from censuses, household surveys, administrative registers and other sources and covering such areas as demography, economic security, health and the environment. These indicators are being used by some countries, within the framework of the monitoring of international conferences, including the United Nations Millennium Declaration and the Plan of Action. This activity has been reinforced by the training of professionals from countries of the region through training courses on indicators of quality of life.

58. The Plan of Action underscored the valuable role of independent, impartial monitoring of progress in its implementation. HelpAge International has developed a project in five countries, the older citizen's monitoring project, which facilitates the participation of older people in monitoring the commitments made by Member States in the Plan of Action. This project, supported by the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, focuses, in particular, on access by older people to health-care facilities.

59. **In order to facilitate the review and appraisal exercise, the Assembly may wish to request the Commission for Social Development to clarify the role of the regional commissions in facilitating the review and appraisal of the Plan of Action. In addition, the Assembly may wish to encourage the Commission to clarify the content, format and date of its global review and appraisal exercise.**

IV. Conclusion

60. As illustrated in the present report, some progress has been achieved since 2002, particularly on linking ageing and development within the organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, but much more remains to be done. A particular effort is required to implement the developmental perspective of ageing policy at the national level in accordance with the Plan of Action. Maintaining priority on the international agenda for follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing is a challenge, particularly in an environment with many competing issues and limited resources, both human and financial, dedicated to ageing issues within all the organizations and bodies of the United Nations system. Despite an

information campaign organized by Headquarters, including efforts to promote the Plan of Action worldwide, it is not unusual for field staff or government officials to be unaware of the Second World Assembly on Ageing or the Plan of Action.

61. Several other issues impede progress on implementation, particularly the continuing prevalence of stereotypical images and ideas regarding the economic and social situations of older persons. Discussions on development policy continue to consider that older persons constitute one of the most marginalized groups because they continue to be perceived as vulnerable, resource-dependent and non-productive. There is also a prevalent view, particularly within developing countries, that families continue, and will be able to continue, to take care of the needs of older persons, even if it is acknowledged that the economic and social environment has changed. Compounding this perception is the lack of reliable age- and sex-disaggregated data in most developing countries that would provide firm evidence upon which to base the debate surrounding poverty rates among older persons and whether older persons should be included in poverty reduction strategies and programmes. Formulation and implementation of sound policies and programmes continue to be hampered by inadequate data regarding the health and health-care needs of older persons, their social integration, employment, and roles as providers as well as recipients of family and community support.

62. Successful implementation of the Plan of Action requires maintaining support for ageing issues at the highest levels of Governments and throughout the United Nations system. The demographic projections of ageing in all countries make it of paramount importance to continue to include ageing in the development agenda, instead of treating it as an ad hoc issue. **In this regard, the Assembly may wish to call on the Governments, United Nations system agencies and organizations, as well as the non-governmental community, to ensure that the challenges of population ageing and the concerns of older persons are adequately incorporated into their programmes and projects, especially at the country level.**

63. Continuing and effective collaboration of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council is essential for the coordinated implementation of the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits, including the Second World Assembly on Ageing. **The Assembly could invite the functional commissions of the Council to integrate the issues of population and individual ageing into their programmes of work in order to promote implementation of the Plan of Action.** It is equally important to ensure that focal points on ageing, in each of the relevant organizations, funds and agencies of the United Nations system, are established and functional. **The Assembly may wish to reiterate its request to the organizations and bodies of the United Nations system to assign full-time focal points on ageing and provide them with adequate resources to further implementation, particularly through appropriate mainstreaming action.**